

Indiana.

We give, from the Hon. Robert Dale Owen, the leading member of the Indiana representation in the last Congress, a communication of some length and of much interest on the subject of the public debt of that State, and explanatory of the efforts she has made to meet the demands of her creditors. It is clear, comprehensive, and full of valuable statistical information bearing on the present condition of Indiana; and contains an important suggestion connected with her future standing and prospects.

INDIANA. HER PUBLIC DEBT, AND HER CONDUCT TOWARDS HER CREDITORS.

By the Editor of the Sun.

Sir:—During the past winter, some of your neighbors of the city press, especially the Editor of the Tribune, have seen fit to speak in terms unmeasured and unjustified by facts, of the State of Indiana, in connection with her public debt and her treatment of her creditors. As one of her representatives in the late Congress, I sought occasion during the session that has just closed, to reply to such aspersions on the floor of the House; but finding no suitable opportunity, I ask that you will be kind enough to allow me to avail myself of the extensive circulation of the Sun, in stating the facts of the case. And, these facts, I am willing to abide the judgment of the country, confidently committing to well informed public opinion, the reputation of my adopted State.

It is but too well known, that Indiana, some nine years since, misled by the success of similar undertakings in older States, engaged in an extensive system of public works; a system of itself without judgment and managed without discretion. The result has been, that of nine different works, which with rash improvidence growing out of sectional jealousies, she undertook to construct and finish simultaneously, not one is yet completed; nor, with the single exception of her Wabash and Erie Canal, yet approaches completion. The State is dotted over with detached fragments of works, utterly worthless and unproductive; deep ditches, standing idle, without apparent purpose, in some remote valleys, washed into shapeless masses, year after year, by the action of the elements. And, with scarcely an item of productive value as an equivalent. Those who thus rashly guided her councils have entailed upon the State, for Internal Improvement alone, a debt of fully twelve millions of dollars; nearly eleven millions of foreign and upwards of a million and a quarter of domestic debt. The whole of that amount, however, it ought to be stated, has not been squandered even by the bad management that ruled her public business. For about three millions of her bonds, included in the above debt, she never received the money at all. Her Fund Commissioners, with a degree of imprudence that merits the epithet of recklessness, sold on credit to an institution, then on the verge of bankruptcy, (the Morris Canal Co.) upwards of two millions and three quarters of her bonds, and nearly a quarter of a million more to sundry free Banks of Western New York; the whole proving a dead loss by the insolvency of these institutions. An examination set on foot by the Agent of the State proves, that these bonds were almost instantly transferred or hypothecated to third persons, unapprised, as it appears, of the nature of the transactions by which they were obtained.

These circumstances, taken altogether, form a case well calculated to test, to the uttermost, the good faith and honor of a State. The people of Indiana, however, and keenly feel, that the confidence they have reposed in some of their public servants has been shamefully abused. Their property has been virtually mortgaged for an amount of principal fully equal to ONE-TENTH of their present entire taxable list, real and personal. For that amount, enormous compared to the property of the State, her citizens know that they have, with exceptions not worth regarding, absolutely nothing to show; not a dollar of annual revenue to rely on. And further, they know, that out of a fourth of that amount they have been defrauded by speculating institutions.

All this furnishes no sufficient reason why Indiana should refuse to pay her debt. But it must be confessed, that it offers temptations to repudiation such as nations are not often exposed to.

How, under these trying circumstances, has she heavily burdened herself? It ought to be stated, that she acted like a wholesome swimmer! As your neighbor of the Tribune (adopting language unworthy of him, fit only for the self-righteous exclusives of a London club) would have the world believe? Let facts and figures furnish the reply.

Has Indiana repudiated even the very bonds abstracted from her by the false promises of broken banks? No. On the contrary, giving her creditors the full advantage of the doubts in this case, she has regarded their sale as absolute, and has not refused the right to payment of those who now hold them.

All this, it will be replied, is well enough; but fair promises cost nothing. "Pay me that thou owest," such is the language of the creditor. And it is no very satisfactory reply to that demand, that we merely admit, in words, the justice of the debt. What has Indiana done? That is the practical question. Delay becomes denial. What measures has she adopted, what exertions made, to meet her obligations, in terms in which she does not repudiate?

Nine years ago, at the commencement of her Internal Improvement system, the ad valorem State tax levied on her citizens was five cents on every hundred dollars of property. It was gradually increased, first to fifteen cents, then to thirty, and one year, (1841) to forty cents; being eight times the ad valorem tax which originally sufficed with a small poll tax, to pay her current expenses, and to leave her with a surplus of the actual value of her taxes; not, as in Ohio and some other States, on a mere nominal assessment, the poll tax, however, remaining at fifty cents, except in 1841, when it was raised to seventy-five cents for each poll.

By this great increase of taxes, there has been raised in Indiana, by direct taxation and for State purposes alone, in the last eight years, upwards of eighteen millions and six hundred thousand dollars.

But the present current annual expenses of the State government of Indiana are, by the estimate of her Auditor, about seventy thousand dollars. They have, heretofore, been somewhat higher. Putting them, at an average of eighty thousand a year, they would amount, in eight years, to six hundred and forty thousand dollars; or about one third of the amount of taxes raised; leaving two thirds, or about a million and a quarter of dollars, to be applied to extinguishment of her public debt from the single source of direct taxation, and without reckoning bank dividends, sales of public lands and other smaller sources of revenue. It is true, that this amount has chiefly been applied to liquidate the domestic debt of the State, and that, during a portion of that time, the interest on Indiana's foreign debt has remained unpaid. This has happened naturally, almost necessarily, as the result of the extreme pressure of the time pressing the State to the verge of bankruptcy. The State scrip, evidence of her domestic debt, is received in payment of taxes and other State dues. If this be cast up to Indiana as a reproach, it may be asked, in reply, whether there be any example on record of a nation preferring her foreign to her domestic debt; and whether it may not justly be doubted, if England herself, supposing her debt, instead of being as ninety-nine hundredths of it, is a domestic debt, were a foreign, would pay the interest on it, even for a single year. A State which, for eight years, including a disastrous period of the commercial history of the country, has persevered in applying out of every THREE DOLLARS which she raised by taxing her citizens, two towards the payment of her debts, may be admitted to have done what could be reasonably expected of her, in the premises. Of the annual revenue of Great Britain, (of which but a small proportion is derived from taxing her subjects by direct taxation,) there has been applied little more than one half, instead of two-thirds, towards the interest of her debt, while nearly one half has gone for the current expenses of her government.

If, now, it be demanded of me whether I believe that Indiana, disappointed and wronged as she has been, and deeply involved as she is, will yet ultimately discharge her debt, I reply, that if her creditors evince but a moderate degree of conciliation, I feel confident that she will. I introduced into Congress during the late session, a bill, which, fortunately, for our State, passed into a law, by which there was granted to Indiana, about 800,000 acres of land, to aid her in completing her Wabash and Erie, (or rather Ohio and Erie) Canal. This work, not included in her general system of Internal Improvement, but constructed chiefly by means of a separate land fund, and having cost already about four millions of dollars, will connect when completed, the waters of Lake

Erie, by way of Maumee Bay, with the Ohio River at Evansville. Of this important Canal three hundred and fifty miles are already finished, or means provided for its completion, and its completion, by a gap of about one hundred miles, lying on the line between Terre Haute and Evansville, remains incomplete; on which, however, the State expended before she abandoned the undertaking, upwards of a quarter of a million of dollars. About a million and a quarter more is required to complete the entire work; and that sum can, (it is reasonable to believe) be raised, from the lands granted for the purpose.

It is the opinion of some of those who are familiar with the subject and specially interested in the result, that the net proceeds of this Canal, (within our State time) when finished and in full operation, will suffice to pay one half the interest on the foreign debt of Indiana. If acting upon this belief, the bond holders shall consent to receive the net proceeds of that Canal, annually apportioned among them and yearly increasing in amount as they surely would, in full liquidation of one-half the annual interest accruing on the foreign debt, it is my firm conviction, that Indiana would forthwith permanently provide by law for a direct tax, sufficient to pay the other half. About twenty-seven and a half cents on the hundred dollars of her present taxable list (netting about \$275,000) would suffice for that purpose; and seven and a half cents more (produces about \$75,000) would pay the interest in full on her domestic debt, making in all, a tax of three mills and a half on the dollar; very heavy, it must be confessed; but yet half a mill less than that already submitted to in 1841; and I think not exceeding what the people, if they felt assured it would effect the purpose, would be willing to bear; more especially, if, by improved management on the part of the several County boards, the per centage for County purposes were reduced, as it well might be, to one per cent. A poll tax of seventy cents, would suffice, with other small revenues accruing yearly to the State, to defray the expenses of the State Government.

It is proper I should add, that these are but my individual opinions; given without any consultation with our State authorities, or with members of our Legislature. I speak but from my general knowledge of public sentiment in Indiana, and of the strong desire felt by her citizens to rescue from reproach the State, and the arrangement I have suggested would, on the part of the bond holders, and in view of the peculiar features of the case, but fair and just, I believe, from the important character of our Canal, connecting as it does the Lakes with the Mississippi, that, though at first its revenues might fall somewhat short of the amount necessary to complete the full interest; ultimately their income, under the management of the Legislature, would be such, that the Legislature would consent to set apart the Canal proceeds for such a purpose; pledging them to it, until the principal is paid up; and would pass the further revenue laws necessary to carry out the entire plan.

In conclusion, permit me to express the hope that those journalists who have attacked, in vague terms, without knowledge or regard to the facts of the case, the honor and character of Indiana, will do her, at least, the simple justice to state to their readers, that this State, so harshly abused at home and vilified abroad as a culpable and careless defaulter, has regularly imposed upon her citizens direct taxes to such amount, that she has been enabled to set apart, and has set apart and appropriated ever since she first incurred her debt, two dollars out of every three derived from her entire taxes, to the payment of her State debt. I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

ROBERT DALE OWEN.

New York, March 31, 1845.

GENERAL JACKSON.—Isaac Hill, of New Hampshire, who lately visited the Hermitage, says: "I found Gen. Jackson better in health than I expected, yet so weak, if it were any other man, I could scarcely suppose he would live a week. For the last four months he has not attempted to take his customary meals with the family. He sits through the day in a well constructed easy chair, with his writing materials, his miniature bible and hymn book before him. To him are brought as soon as the mail arrives, the newspapers; and he reads them with interest at the Hermitage, his first inquiry was for the daily Washington newspapers, and the letters bearing the postmark of the capital. His complaint is pulmonary; one lobe of the lungs he believes to be entirely consumed. This condition is shown by the shortness of breath, which almost entirely precludes the benefit of personal exercise. When he moves it is so quietly as to produce no disturbance. His feet and ankles are swollen, and he cannot stand, nor find a substitute for salutary exercise in the bathing of his limbs every evening in those medicinal caldrons to produce a healthy action of the skin. Weak as he is, he shaves with his own hand, and combs and adjusts the ample gray hair which continues to add to the dignity of his appearance."

THE U. S. SLOOP OF WAR PEBBLE.—The editor of the Boston Post has received a letter, giving some of the particulars of the sickness of the crew, which he states in the following paragraph: "The sailing master of the Pebble, William A. Henry, and midshipman Smith, of Salem, had died. Capt. Freeland had been very low, but was recovering. Lieut. Miller had left in the Erie for the United States. Lieut. M. was on the sick list. Passed midshipman Fox was appointed sailing master in place of Henry, deceased. One hundred of the crew were sick and on shore—sixteen had died. The Pebble went last fall, during the sickly season, to Biscay, on the coast of Africa, to relieve the inhabitants from an attack made on that place by the negroes. The officers and crew of the Pebble were mostly northern men, as are all or nearly all those who have hitherto been ordered to the coast of Africa by the former Secretaries of the Navy and the present Secretary. The crew of the Pebble was composed of many. The cruise of the Pebble was considered as up. The physicians recommended strongly that her crew should not again, in their present feeble state of health, be ordered to the coast."

CHOCOWAS.—The Vicksburg Sentinel, of the 18th, referring to this tribe of Indians, has the following: "The last remnants of this once powerful tribe are now crossing the river on their way to their new home in the far West. To one who, like the writer, has been familiar to their brouze, inexpressive faces from infancy, it brings associations of peculiar sadness to see them bidding here a last farewell, perhaps to the old hills which gave birth, and are doubtless equally dear to him and them alike. The first playmates of our infancy were the young Chocowas boys of the ten thousands of Warren county."

THE NEW YORK STATE.—We know, we think, the character of the Chocowas well. We knew many of their present stalwart braves in those days of early life, when Indian and white alike forgot feud, but in the unchecked exuberance of youthful feeling, show the real character that policy and habit may afterwards so much conceal; and we know that under the stolid, stoic look he assumes, there is burning in the Indian's nature a heart of fire and feeling—an all-absorbing knowledge of apprehension, that marks and remembers every thing that occurs, and every insult he receives. Cunnah-ah! they are going away! With a visible reluctance, which nothing has overcome but the stern necessity they feel compelling them, they have looked their last on the graves of their sires—the scenes of their youth—and have taken up their slow, toilsome march with their household gods among them, to their new home in a strange land. They are, we think, a brave and noble race, and we are sure, and so long as our State remains, the Chocowas who once owned most of her soil, will be remembered."

The Quebec Mercury gives an account of the death of Donald McLaren, who was employed to carry the mail from Metis to Ristigouche, 97 miles, which he did on foot twice a week, thus walking in the winter on snow shoes 194 miles every six days, with a mail bag weighing from 35 to 40 pounds upon his back. He was a man of iron constitution, whose powers of endurance were the wonder and admiration of all who knew him. The heavy storms of January were too much for him, and he was laid up for a week, after which he renewed his journey, but with diminished strength. In one of them he encountered a severe storm and was overcome in the night, and forced to seek shelter under spruce bushes; where he was found by another carrier, who had feared he would be unable to make his way, and had generously gone after him. He reached a house alive, but very weak, and soon after died.

Annexation in Texas.

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That proved the rogues they tied—
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This quotation occurs very naturally to the mind after reading the extracts from the Texas papers, which will be found in another column.

So "Old Bullion" was right after all! If "Anti-Bentonianism" had been left to itself, Texas might have been lost—would probably have been lost. Instead of being the insidious, treacherous foe to a nation which he represented to be, by a class of persons of whom many would have preferred to see Texas at the bottom of the ocean, put than annexed by, through or with Benton, he turned out to be the choice of the Texans themselves his Bill, his Bill alone, saves the measure! This is as it should be. Benton was the first to raise his already loud and strong voice, a quarter of a century ago, against the abandonment of Texas, and in favor of its recovery at the earliest practicable period; it well befitting him that he be the author of the legislative bill by means of which that long pursued object is to be at last attained.

The question of the choice to be made by the President between the two plans referred by Congress to his discretion, may now of course be considered as decided. Even had there before existed much doubt in his mind which of the two was the better and wisest mode to adopt—which we do not believe—this evidence of his high character, and the respectability upon the House joint resolutions, must be conclusively in reception of the Milton Brown proposition by the Texans, is precisely what Benton foretold—what he was vilified and ridiculed for foretelling—what he, and all of us who thought with him and supported him, were denounced as enemies to Annexation, for foretelling. And when Benton, Dix, Haywood, Bagby, and others, consented to the compromise of uniting the two plans as alternatives at the option of the President, they knew that the first proposition (the Milton Brown resolutions) was mere void and unmeaning surplusage in the act for which they gave their votes. They knew what would be the choice of Texas herself—independently of their confidence in the honest wisdom of the President.

Even the Richmond Enquirer—a paper which with the best intentions has made some very great mistakes in regard to this question, and come near doing a great deal of irreparable mischief too—now calls upon the President, instantly on the receipt of this intelligence from Texas, to abandon the House resolutions, and take up Benton's Bill, by appointing a commissioner to proceed to Texas, to unite with our present able Charge there in negotiating more satisfactory terms of Annexation. A la bonne heure! We are glad to witness its prompt, candid and many course—which it needed no gift of prophecy to anticipate. We trust the President will lose no time in carrying this suggestion into effect. Our charge in Texas, Major Donelson, cannot fail to appreciate the wisdom of a better number, so as to unite in that body the three great sections of the North, the South and the West. The trifling additional cost is of little account in comparison with the importance of conciliating the favor of all parts of the Union, to the results of the important negotiation to be arranged by the commissioners. There is a high national interest in this matter, as it secures the Union, would make the selection of some prominent Whig friendly to Annexation, as one of the members of this commission, at once expedient, and a very proper recognition of the fact that there is such a thing as Whig Party, and that it embraces within a small fraction half of our whole population.

As for Mr. Tyler's foolish and disgraceful attempt to cheat Congress and his successor, by despatching to Texas, on the last day of his abused power, the announcement of his choice between the two modes, this will be embossed on the memory of the Senate in Texas, Major Donelson, cannot fail to appreciate the wisdom of a better number, so as to unite in that body the three great sections of the North, the South and the West. The trifling additional cost is of little account in comparison with the importance of conciliating the favor of all parts of the Union, to the results of the important negotiation to be arranged by the commissioners. There is a high national interest in this matter, as it secures the Union, would make the selection of some prominent Whig friendly to Annexation, as one of the members of this commission, at once expedient, and a very proper recognition of the fact that there is such a thing as Whig Party, and that it embraces within a small fraction half of our whole population.

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Specie,	\$13,500,000
Other articles,	1,500,000
Total,	\$15,000,000

The imports were—

England,	4,500,000
France,	3,000,000
Hamburg,	1,500,000
United States,	800,000
Other Places,	3,500,000
Total,	12,300,000

Excess Exports, \$2,700,000. This indicates the extent to which smuggling is carried on under the absurdly oppressive laws "to protect" her home industry. The duties collected on the imports were \$5,257,997, or about 45 per cent. average. The corruption of the government officers is proverbial, and consequently, large quantities of goods are entered, even now, without paying duties, and when carried across the Prairies from the United States to Santa Fe. Some details of this trade for the last year will be found under the commercial head of yesterday's paper. The consumption of cotton goods is very extensive in Mexico, and the import of cotton twine is prohibited by the present government, ostensibly to encourage "home manufactures," but really to raise money by selling permits for its introduction. There are in Mexico fifty-three factories, having 131,280 spindles, which consume about 3,000,000 pounds of cotton per annum, while the growth of Mexico is about 1,000,000 pounds only. There are about five thousand hand looms in Mexico, which work up all the spun yarn into cotton cloth, the price of which will average twenty-five cents, for an article worth ten cents in the United States. The benefit which the Mexicans derive from this trade, will be about the same as the extra fifteen cents per yard. Now, the Mexican frontier adjoining the State of Texas is about three thousand miles in length, with no means, if the officers had the will, to prevent the smuggling of sufficient goods to supply all Mexico. This process has hitherto been kept in check only by the barren waste of eight hundred miles to be travelled before reaching her cities from the United States, and the demoralizing influence of the "vigilantes," which, in Mexico, is more openly adopted than in the United States, as a direct means of extorting money from the people.

The "national debt" of this oppressed race is as follows:

Internal debt,	\$18,550,000
English,	60,000,000
United States claims,	2,400,000
Other claims,	3,200,000
Total,	\$84,150,000

The customs were solemnly pledged for the payment of the first item, but the highly respectable late Dictator seized them for his own use. The whole revenue of Mexico for 1840 was \$12,744,157, derived from most ruinous taxation. The natural effect of this ruinous taxation in Mexico will now have the same effect in Texas, as does that of Spain in the frontier towns of France, viz: the formation of extensive depots for goods to run into Mexico in all directions.

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Other claims,	3,200,000
Total,	\$84,150,000

The customs were solemnly pledged for the payment of the first item, but the highly respectable late Dictator seized them for his own use. The whole revenue of Mexico for 1840 was \$12,744,157, derived from most ruinous taxation. The natural effect of this ruinous taxation in Mexico will now have the same effect in Texas, as does that of Spain in the frontier towns of France, viz: the formation of extensive depots for goods to run into Mexico in all directions.

Annexation in Texas.

There's rarely much to be gained by calling Texas a "Slave State." In the first place, though the whole country were a slave, it would not be a "Slave State," for the word "Slave State" would have about as much meaning as the word "Slave Nation." In the second place, if you will only quietly wait awhile, and possess your soul in patience, till time, the great solver of problems, and his assistants, the chance is ten to one that he will come out right, and they will be compelled to confess their wrong.

"But soon a wonder came to light
That proved the rogues they tied—
The man recovered from the bite,
The dog that bit that died."

This quotation occurs very naturally to the mind after reading the extracts from the Texas papers, which will be found in another column.

So "Old Bullion" was right after all! If "Anti-Bentonianism" had been left to itself, Texas might have been lost—would probably have been lost. Instead of being the insidious, treacherous foe to a nation which he represented to be, by a class of persons of whom many would have preferred to see Texas at the bottom of the ocean, put than annexed by, through or with Benton, he turned out to be the choice of the Texans themselves his Bill, his Bill alone, saves the measure! This is as it should be. Benton was the first to raise his already loud and strong voice, a quarter of a century ago, against the abandonment of Texas, and in favor of its recovery at the earliest practicable period; it well befitting him that he be the author of the legislative bill by means of which that long pursued object is to be at last attained.

The question of the choice to be made by the President between the two plans referred by Congress to his discretion, may now of course be considered as decided. Even had there before existed much doubt in his mind which of the two was the better and wisest mode to adopt—which we do not believe—this evidence of his high character, and the respectability upon the House joint resolutions, must be conclusively in reception of the Milton Brown proposition by the Texans, is precisely what Benton foretold—what he was vilified and ridiculed for foretelling—what he, and all of us who thought with him and supported him, were denounced as enemies to Annexation, for foretelling. And when Benton, Dix, Haywood, Bagby, and others, consented to the compromise of uniting the two plans as alternatives at the option of the President, they knew that the first proposition (the Milton Brown resolutions) was mere void and unmeaning surplusage in the act for which they gave their votes. They knew what would be the choice of Texas herself—independently of their confidence in the honest wisdom of the President.

Even the Richmond Enquirer—a paper which with the best intentions has made some very great mistakes in regard to this question, and come near doing a great deal of irreparable mischief too—now calls upon the President, instantly on the receipt of this intelligence from Texas, to abandon the House resolutions, and take up Benton's Bill, by appointing a commissioner to proceed to Texas, to unite with our present able Charge there in negotiating more satisfactory terms of Annexation. A la bonne heure! We are glad to witness its prompt, candid and many course—which it needed no gift of prophecy to anticipate. We trust the President will lose no time in carrying this suggestion into effect. Our charge in Texas, Major Donelson, cannot fail to appreciate the wisdom of a better number, so as to unite in that body the three great sections of the North, the South and the West. The trifling additional cost is of little account in comparison with the importance of conciliating the favor of all parts of the Union, to the results of the important negotiation to be arranged by the commissioners. There is a high national interest in this matter, as it secures the Union, would make the selection of some prominent Whig friendly to Annexation, as one of the members of this commission, at once expedient, and a very proper recognition of the fact that there is such a thing as Whig Party, and that it embraces within a small fraction half of our whole population.

As for Mr. Tyler's foolish and disgraceful attempt to cheat Congress and his successor, by despatching to Texas, on the last day of his abused power, the announcement of his choice between the two modes, this will be embossed on the memory of the Senate in Texas, Major Donelson, cannot fail to appreciate the wisdom of a better number, so as to unite in that body the three great sections of the North, the South and the West. The trifling additional cost is of little account in comparison with the importance of conciliating the favor of all parts of the Union, to the results of the important negotiation to be arranged by the commissioners. There is a high national interest in this matter, as it secures the Union, would make the selection of some prominent Whig friendly to Annexation, as one of the members of this commission, at once expedient, and a very proper recognition of the fact that there is such a thing as Whig Party, and that it embraces within a small fraction half of our whole population.

We bid our friends be all of good cheer. There is no real danger menacing the success of the Annexation, notwithstanding the manner in which some seem to be staggered by the action of the House. Our charge in Texas, Major Donelson, cannot fail to appreciate the wisdom of a better number, so as to unite in that body the three great sections of the North, the South and the West. The trifling additional cost is of little account in comparison with the importance of conciliating the favor of all parts of the Union, to the results of the important negotiation to be arranged by the commissioners. There is a high national interest in this matter, as it secures the Union, would make the selection of some prominent Whig friendly to Annexation, as one of the members of this commission, at once expedient, and a very proper recognition of the fact that there is such a thing as Whig Party, and that it embraces within a small fraction half of our whole population.

The last estimate was that made by the Government. Now, of these 7,015,500 persons who occupy Mexico, it